

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION GENEVA

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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S E C R E T MOSCOW 1867

GENEVA FOR US DEL CSCE

VIENNA FOR US DEL MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR, GW

SUBJ: BREZHNEV CORRESPONDENCE WITH POMPIDOU AND BRANDT

1. AT THE WEEKLY QUADRIPARTITE MEETING FEBRUARY 7, BOTH FRENCH AMBASSADOR VIMONT AND FRG AMBASSADOR SAHM REPORTED THAT BREZHNEV HAD COMMUNICATED RECENTLY WITH POMPIDOU AND CHANCELLOR BRANDT ON THE SUBJECT OF CSCE. TO THE BEST OF VIMONT'S RECOLLECTION, THE BREZHNEV LETTER TO POMPIDOU WAS DATED AROUND JAN. 15, AND BREZHNEV'S LETTER TO BRANDT MUST HAVE BEEN AROUND THE SAME TIME, ACCORDING TO SAHM. VIMONT INDICATED THAT CSCE WAS DISCUSSED IN WELL-KNOWN TERMS (NO DOUBT ALONG THE LINES OF GROMYKO'S COMMENTS IN WASHINGTON).

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THE LETTER TO POMPIDOU DID SUGGEST ONCE MORE THAT THE

SOVIET SIDE DESIRES TO HAVE CSCE CONCLUDE WITH A SUMMIT MEETING. (VIMONT POINTED OUT THAT FRANCE CONTINUES TO HOLD TO ITS PREVIOUS POSITION THAT A SUMMIT MEETING MAY BE CONSIDERED IF THE RESULTS OF CSCE ARE IMPRESSIVE.) SAHM'S ONLY COMMENT ON THE LETTER TO BRANDT WAS THAT CSCE WAS THE SOLE SUBJECT OF THE MESSAGE AND THAT, BASICALLY, IT REVEALED A SOCIET DESIRE TO ACCELERATE THE PACE OF NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA.

2. COMMENT: THESE LETTERS, ALONG WITH OTHER BILATERAL APPROACHES SUCH AS GROMYKO'S IN WASHINGTON, SEEM TO REPRESENT A CONCERTED SOVIET EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO FURTHER SLIPPAGE IN CSCE SCHEDULE. THEY ALSO SERVE THE PURPOSE, AS NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA HEAD INTO THE HOME STRETCH, OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE WEST TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. ALTHOUGH SOVIETS BY NOW PRESUMABLY CAN SEE THE SHAPE OF THE VARIOUS COMPROMISES WHICH WILL PROBABLY EMERGE AT GENEVA, WE FEEL IT UNLIKELY THAT THEY WILL BE INCLINED TO COMPROMISE WITHOUT SOME FURTHER PROBING OF WESTERN FIRMNESS. PART OF THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THE CONSTANT PRESSURE FROM INSIDE THE REGIME NOT TO GIVE GROUND ON QUESTIONS PERCEIVED AS RELATING TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND THE NEED OF BREZHNEV TO SHOW GAINS FROM HIS DETENTE POLICY. WHILE THE PRESSURES ON THE WEST COULD BE DESIGNED ALSO WITH THE FALLBACK PURPOSE OF PUTTING THE BLAME ON THE WEST IN THE EVENT CSCE FAILED TO REACH ITS CLIMAX, WE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS CURRENTLY REGARD THAT AS A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY. MOSCOW HAS INVESTED HEAVILY IN THE CSCE ENDEAVOR; AND A SUCCESSFUL CSCE IS CERTAINLY A PART OF THE SOVIET LONG-TERM DETENTE STRATEGY WHICH INCLUDES EVENTUALLY MOVING ON TO A SIMILAR UNDERTAKING IN ASIA WHERE A PRINCIPLE SUCH AS THE INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS HAS A SPECIAL MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS.

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